

GANGS



GANGS ARE NOT A PROBLEM ONLY IN LARGE CITIES.

Gangs, and the violence they cause, are problems for everyone across the country.

- 32% of cities with population between 25,000 and 50,000 reported at least one homicide from 1999 to 2000 that was attributed to gang violence.¹
- In 1996, 50% of gang members were under the age of 18, but in 1999 only 37% of gang members were estimated to be under the age of 18.²
- In 1999 it is estimated that 47% of gang members were Hispanic, 31% were African American, 13% were white, and 7% were Asian. These percentages seem to remain fairly steady over the years.³ A gang is a group of 3 or more individuals, which possess leadership, structure, an identification system, and is involved in antisocial or criminal behavior.

WHAT IS A GANG?

A gang is a group of 3 or more individuals, which possess leadership, structure, an identification system, and is involved in antisocial or criminal behavior.

HOW CAN I SPOT IDENTIFICATION SYMBOLS?

- Graffiti/Tagging: Symbols and “unusual” letters on buildings, sidewalks, school books, book bags, and clothing. Look for symbols that show up repeatedly.
- Marking: Graffiti on the person, tattoos or other markings may match symbols found on personal items and other property. Gang members are tattooed to show allegiance to their gang.
- Clothing: Many gangs require members to dress alike, the same colors, jackets, hats, shoes, etc. Check for bandannas (rags) in a pocket or worn as an accessory. Also dressing “left” or “right” (i.e. left pant leg rolled up, left pocket with a bandanna hanging out, hat bill to the left, etc.)

COULD MY CHILD BE INVOLVED WITH A GANG?

Yes.

Gang membership crosses all boundaries of age, sex, race, academic achievement, and economic status.

WHAT SIGNS CAN I LOOK FOR IN MY CHILD?

- A change in friends or being secretive about who their friends are.
- Violent behavior.
- Refusal to obey authority and being disrespectful to authority figures.
- Drug/alcohol use and/or possession.
- Possession of weapons (knives, guns, brass knuckles).
- Sporadic school attendance and grade decline.
- Use of hand signals resembling sign language.
- Drawing gang signs or graffiti.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I SUSPECT MY CHILD IS INVOLVED WITH A GANG?

- Enforce a strict curfew and know the whereabouts of your child.
- Get to know your child's friends.
- Set an example of nonviolent reactions to situations.
- Get your child involved in extracurricular activities.
- Utilize your local resources for help and support them.
- Educate other parents and work with schools and local law enforcement agencies.

1. Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, National Youth Gang Survey Trends from 1996 to 2000, by Arlen Egley, Jr.



“The mission of the Grove City Division of Police is to serve and protect all by providing professional law enforcement services in partnership with the community.”

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Mayor Richard L. Stage
Chief Steven R. Robinette

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DIVISION OF POLICE**

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